

**Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, DC 20554**

**In the Matter of:**

<b>Amendment of Part 97 of the Commission's Rules</b>	)	
<b>to Implement WRC-03 Regulations Applicable to</b>	)	<b>WT Docket No. 05-235</b>
<b>Requirements for Operator Licenses in the</b>	)	
<b>Amateur Radio Service</b>	)	

**To: The Commission**

**COMMENTS OF RAY SOIFER**

Ray Soifer, pursuant to Section 1.415 of the Commission's Rules [47 C.F.R. §1.415], hereby respectfully submits comments in response to the *Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Order*, released July 19, 2005 (the Notice). These comments are timely filed. For his comments, Ray Soifer states as follows.

1. I am an FCC-licensed amateur radio operator, holding an Extra Class license (W2RS) as well as a degree in Electrical Engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. I maintain and operate stations utilizing all authorized amateur bands from 1.8 through 450 MHz, including Morse, voice and digital modes, and have published numerous technical papers and articles in amateur and professional journals in the U.S. and overseas. I also serve as a Volunteer Examiner under the ARRL/VEC program.

2. The Notice proposes to eliminate the present 5 WPM Morse requirement for all classes of amateur license for which such a requirement currently exists. Briefly summarizing the major arguments in support of this proposal, it is noted that WRC-03 eliminated the previously-existing treaty requirement, and that an individual's Morse ability is not necessarily indicative of that individual's ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art. Others

supporting the Commission's proposal have observed that many other countries, though not all, have so far eliminated Morse requirements for their own amateur licenses, and that eliminating the present Morse requirement might enable faster growth in the number of licensed amateurs as well as in the number of amateurs availing themselves of the learning opportunities afforded by study for the Extra Class license.

3. While others have and will offer counter-arguments worthy of consideration, I have no disagreement with these arguments, and thus would support at least some further relaxation of Morse requirements. However, I believe that what has been missing from this discussion so far is a serious look at the privileges afforded by the Extra Class license, and what should logically be required for them in the way of demonstrated skills.

4. At present, those privileges include the right to apply for a call sign signifying the holder's Extra Class status, as well as exclusive access (relative to other FCC-licensed amateurs) to the lower 25 kHz of the 3.5, 7, 14, and 21 MHz amateur bands, as well as 3750-3775 kHz, 14.150-14.175 MHz and 21.200-21.225 MHz.

5. Of those, the first four segments listed – 3500-3525 kHz, 7000-7025 kHz, 14.000-14.025 MHz, and 21.000-21.025 MHz – are used almost exclusively for Morse telegraphy by amateurs throughout the world, while the last three segments listed are used almost exclusively for SSB voice. Especially with respect to 3500-3525 and 7000-7025 kHz, these first four segments ("bottom 25 kHz segments") also tend to be where the most long-distance (DX) Morse communication occurs in their respective bands, and thus are particularly attractive to amateurs interested in this type of operation.

6. To amateurs not interested in Morse telegraphy – the very ones who would find the Commission's proposal attractive – the bottom 25 kHz segments are not relevant as inducements

to upgrade. Conversely, those who are interested in Morse telegraphy, either presently or prospectively, and thus interested in obtaining access to these segments, would not object to the continuation of a Morse requirement for their use. Moreover, it seems logical that at least some familiarity with Morse be required of those seeking authorization to operate in frequency segments where Morse is used almost exclusively.

7. I propose, therefore, that a new class of license be instituted, which for purposes of these comments I will call First Class so as not to confuse it with other license-class names presently or recently in use. Applicants for First Class licenses would be required to pass the same written examination elements as Extra Class, but without a Morse requirement. First Class licensees would have all Extra Class privileges, including call signs, except for the four bottom 25 kHz segments.

8. Under my proposal, the present Extra Class license would be retained in its entirety, including the 5 WPM Morse requirement. Thus, to obtain access to the bottom 25 kHz segments, all a First Class licensee would have to do would be to pass the present 5 WPM code test.

9. This proposal involves no loss of privileges for any present amateur licensee, nor does it involve any increase in workload for volunteer examiners or VECs. Also, since under the Commission's proposal the present Technician Plus license class would be eliminated, the number of amateur license classes would remain the same.

10. My proposal retains all of the advantages of the Commission's proposal, since those not interested in Morse would be given all the incentives to upgrade which they would find meaningful. Meanwhile, those wishing access to the bottom 25 kHz segments would still be required to demonstrate minimal familiarity with Morse (i.e., a 5 WPM code test), appropriate

given the way in which those segments are used. I urge the Commission to give this proposal serious consideration..

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

/s/

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